

2-11-2013

Dear Chairman Murphy and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

My name is Bradley Williams. I am 64 years old and I do not want a doctor or nurse telling me or my wife that we should murder ourselves. We have the right to be left alone. We have been tax payers in Montana for over 20 years and we expect our government to protect and to value our lives.

I am also the President of Montanans Against Assisted Suicide, A Non-Profit Public Benefit Corporation.

We organized a public education campaign that included 57 days manning fair booths across the state.

I served 50 of those days interviewing thousands of Montanans one on one. When people approached our table expressing disagreement with our position, I would lean back and ask, "Why is that?" They would tell me their story. Then I would ask, "Do you know how the laws work?"

A careful read of the bills to legalize assisted suicide reveal flaws and gaps that expose the laws to be a recipe for elder abuse. Starting with, the doctor is not present at the-administration-of-the-lethal-dose and indeed there is no witness required. Then someone else can speak for you. Family notification is not required. Heirs are allowed in the application process. The heirs can pick up the prescription at the pharmacy and bring it into the house. The heirs can administer the lethal dose without the consent of the patient. There is more but with this short list, the overwhelming response from those that thought they were for it would say, "I'm not for that".

Through our public education campaign we received 4,667 signatures on our petition against legalizing assisted suicide, with some individual duplicates. The petition is to you the Legislature and the Governor. And here is your copy for the record. Our hope is that the petition combined with your knowledge that once Montanans learn about how these bills are written, what they say and what they don't, "Montanans are not for legalization."

Here is the voice of Kathryn Judson from Oregon where it has been legal:
Titled

"I was afraid to leave my husband alone"

Letter from Oregon resident, Kathryn Judson, Published in the Hawaii Free Press, February 15, 2011.

"When my husband was seriously ill several years ago, I collapsed in a half-exhausted heap in a chair once I got him into the doctor's office, relieved that we were going to get badly needed help (or so I thought).

To my surprise and horror, during the exam I overheard the doctor giving my husband a sales pitch for assisted suicide. 'Think of what it will spare your wife, we need to think of her' he said, as a clincher.

Now, if the doctor had wanted to say 'I don't see any way I can help you, knowing what I know, and having the skills I have' that would have been one thing. If he'd wanted to opine that certain treatments weren't worth it as far as he could see, that would be one thing. But he was tempting my husband to commit suicide. And that is something different.

I was indignant that the doctor was not only trying to decide what was best for David, but also what was supposedly best for me (without even consulting me, no less).

We got a different doctor, and David lived another five years or so. But after that nightmare in the first doctor's office, and encounters with a 'death with dignity' inclined nurse, I was afraid to leave my husband alone again with doctors and nurses, for fear they'd morph from care providers to enemies, with no one around to stop them.

It's not a good thing, wondering who you can trust in a hospital or clinic....."
Kathryn Judson, Oregon

Senators, I'll say it again, we have the right to be left alone. Please vote NO on SB 220.

Bradley Williams

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